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Lincoln County selected for Hometown Humanities program

Humanities Montana selected Lincoln County as the site for the 2014 Hometown Humanities from a pool of very competitive applications. Jessie Pate of the Lincoln County Public Libraries and Sarah Barrick of Libby Public Schools will work with Humanities Montana staff and people from Eureka, Troy and other communities to schedule humanities programming throughout the county in the coming year.

Hometown Humanities includes 15 to 25 events, all free of charge and open to the public, selected from Humanities Montana's extensive program catalog. The schedule will include public speakers from its Speakers Bureau and Speakers in the Schools programs, community conversations on local issues, reading and discussion groups, and an array of other possibilities. The program is designed to get people talking – sometimes about challenging and sensitive subjects – in ways that broaden perspectives and bring people together.

In the meantime, Hometown Humanities is in full swing in Dillon. In May, a series of community conversations are on tap, and another of the popular downtown Dillon walking history tours. The previous participant was Miles City.

For more information, visit www.humanitiesmontana.org/programs/hometownhumanities.

MORE CONGRATS TO ...

The **Montana ShamRockers**, a Polson-based quintet that's headed to Ireland in June for a performance at the Thomas Meagher Center in Waterford. The group, which includes John Glueckert, Rick Skates, Rob Sloan, Mike Lozar and Neal Lewing (co-producer of the Port Polson Players), kicked off their One Decade Down Tour last May at the Northwest Folklife Festival in Seattle. Fold and Acoustic Music Exchange calls their albums "boggingly infectious and spirited."

The **Hellgate High School Jazz Band**, which was among 12 finalists selected to compete in the 2014 Swing Central competition, held in March in Savannah, GA. The band earned entry to the workshop with juried auditions of its past performances. Swing Central received more than 50 auditions for this year's workshop and competition, which is part of the annual Savannah Music Festival and attracts "some of the top players from New York City," Hellgate Jazz Band Director Leon Slater told the *Missoulian*. "The educational aspect of this should just be huge for our kids." The **Hellgate Choirs** were also on the road, performing April 26 at Carnegie Hall in New York City, where choir members worked with master singers Grant Gershon, Z. Randall Stroope and Joshua Habberman. The choir program, under the direction of Lee Kirkegaard, was named a Grammy Signature School semi-finalist last fall.

The Montana Historical Society's **Montana The Magazine of Western History**, which has been inducted into the Montana Cowboy Hall of Fame. "Our mission is to honor the cowboy way of life, Indian culture, and our collective shared western heritage," said Hall of Fame Executive Director Christy Stensland. "The MHS magazine was selected because of its significant contribution over the years in passing on and preserving those stories with the power of the written word. It is well deserved." MHS Director Bruce Whittenberg said it was an honor to be recognized by the organization for the important work the magazine does to tell the stories of Montana and educate people across the state and the world. *Montana The Magazine of Western History* is an award-winning quarterly that has subscribers in all 50 states and in many foreign countries.

The six recipients of Missoula Cultural Council Arts Awards, presented March 25 during the organization's annual awards luncheon. This year's recipients are: Individual Artist – internationally acclaimed ceramic artist, musician and University of Montana art professor **Beth Lo**; Cultural Achievement – **Cathy Capps**, a tireless volunteer and board member for several arts and cultural organizations; Cultural Vision – **Joel Baird**, general manager of Missoula Community Access Television; Business Support for the Arts – **Missoula Federal Credit Union**; and Arts Educator – **Lisa Deer**, director of On Center Performing Arts, and **Tarn Ream**, a UM dance instructor and founder of Unity Dance and Drum. In announcing the award winners, Missoula Cultural Council Executive Director Tom Bensen said, "These annual awards indicate the strong community support and creative energy that makes Missoula a very special place to live and work."

Gloria Wester and **High Plains Architects**, recipients of the Historic Preservation Awards, presented by the Yellowstone Historic Preservation Board (YHPB) at its annual Preservation Roundtable, March 18 at the Union Depot in Billings. Wester received the Eugene Carroll Historic Preservation Award for taking a leadership role with the Pompeys Pillar Historical Association; and High Plains Architects was given the Best Practices Achievement Award for renovations to the Tracy Lofts Building at 2600 Montana Ave.

The **Yellowstone Art Museum** in Billings, which received a \$25,000 grant from the BNSF Foundation on behalf of its 50th anniversary. The grant supports ambitious new exhibitions, expanded art education, and additional special events throughout 2014. In turn, the museum named the foundation its Heritage Sponsor for the coming year. "The Foundation is proud to support the YAM and the invaluable work they do to promote regional art and foster art education," said Matt Jones, public affairs director for BNSF.

The **MAPS Media Institute** in Hamilton, which received \$7,500 from State Farm Insurance to fund the continuation of its "Give Back" program. MAPS' "Give Back" tradition began in 2010 when it donated time, services, equipment and student talent to the Valley Veterans Center in Hamilton. The goals and objectives of pro-bono student work are engaging students in community projects to broaden their awareness and sensitivity to others in need. This is the second award MAPS has received from State Farm. In 2012, the insurance company became a MAPS fee-based client and commissioned four public service announcements for television broadcast. In 2013, three of the PSAs were honored with "Awards of Excellence" by the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences, NW. This honor is the equivalent of a student Emmy award. The 2014 "Give Back" project is a collaboration with the Ravalli County DUI Task Force.

– From the *Ravalli Republic*, Feb. 22

TRANSITIONS



Kevin Asselin

Welcome to **Kevin Asselin**, who took the helm as executive artistic director of Montana Shakespeare in the Parks Jan. 13 after a national search. He is a former cast member of the theatre company and a professor of acting and movement at Oklahoma City University. Asselin holds an MFA degree in acting from the University of Illinois at Urbana – Champaign and a bachelor of science in music and theatre from Plymouth State University. A member of Actors Equity, his Chicago acting credits include more than eight productions with the Tony Award-winning Chicago Shakespeare Theatre, the Goodman Theatre, Steppenwolf Theatre, Writers Theatre, Defiant Theatre, Rising Moon Theatre, Shakespeare on the Green, Dolphin Back Theatre, The Chicago Symphony and others. "Montana Shakespeare in the Parks is one of the most notable cultural outreach programs in Montana," said Nancy Cornwell, dean of the Montana State University College of Arts and Architecture in making the announcement. "With Kevin joining us as executive artistic director, we will not only insure the future of our mission to bring Shakespeare to the communities of Montana and the Northern Rockies continues, but now MSIP will be poised to grow in exciting new ways – reaching new audiences with educational programs and expanding our impact locally." While with Montana Shakespeare in the Parks, Asselin appeared in "Henry IV, Part One," "The Comedy of Errors," "As You Like It," and "She Stoops to Conquer." He also toured with Montana Shakespeare in the Schools and was the co-creator of Montana Shakes!, Montana Shakespeare in the Parks' elementary school touring program. He directed "The Two Gentlemen of Verona," this season's Shakespeare in the Schools production. Asselin is a two-time Joseph Jefferson-nominated fight director and has staged fights for more than 40 theatres. He replaces Joel Jahnke, who retired as artistic director of Montana Shakespeare in the Parks last summer after 36 years with the company. MSIP's season begins in late June with productions of "As You Like It," directed by Asselin, and "Romeo and Juliet."



Lorna Nelson

So long and best wishes to the Bozeman Symphony's principal oboist, **Lorna Nelson**, who retired at the conclusion of the concert season in April after 49 years with the symphony. Nelson joined the orchestra in 1965, commuting from Big Timber. A native of Sidney who graduated with high honors from The University of Montana, she began her career teaching in the Great Falls Public Schools. After moving to Bozeman, she gave lessons in her private studio, and taught oboe, organ, piano and woodwind techniques at Montana State University until retiring in May 2006. As a musician, she played with the Helena Symphony, and every other Montana orchestra at some time in her career, as well as performing with Spokane's Royal Fireworks Band for many years, and the Gladsaxe Orchestra in Copenhagen, Denmark, for a season. In Bozeman, she has performed with the Intermountain Opera, the Montana Ballet, and the Gallatin Chamber Orchestra (during its five-year existence). She was a founding member of the Bozeman-based Gallatin Woodwind Quintet (GWQ), and has toured with the ensemble to the Kumamoto area of Japan and Singapore, as well as many venues in the Northwest. Her chamber-music endeavors include concerts through the Bozeman Symphony's "Far Afield" program with both the GWQ and OBoze (a double-reed trio); and the First Sunday Concert Series at St. James with the Nelson-Jacobson Duo (oboe, organ). She is also known as a fine accompanist on piano and organ for both singers and instrumental soloists. "Lorna has been a valued member of our musical community in Bozeman for many years," wrote Alan Leech, principal bassoonist with the Bozeman Symphony. "Her long dedication to the artful presentation of music is much appreciated by those of us who have performed by her side, and have listened to her 'singing' oboe over the years."

Welcome to **Brad Robinson**, the new operations director at the Archie Bray Foundation in Helena. Robinson brings both for-profit and nonprofit experience to this new position at the Bray. During the past nine years, he has served as member services director for the Montana Nonprofit Association (MNA), and is credited with creating one of the strongest membership programs in the state nonprofit association network, stewarding numerous cost-saving programs and founding the MNA health insurance program. He also worked as the executive director of the Montana Natural History Center in Missoula, and was a founder and manager of Big Sky Brewing Company, Montana's largest brewery. Other changes at the ceramic arts center include a shift for **Marcia Eidel** from director of development to director of planned giving; **Teresa Amsbaugh**, who has served as development officer, will lead efforts to garner grant support from foundations; and **Mitch Carroll**, the Bray's membership coordinator, will expand his outreach and, along with director Steve Lee, be one of the primary contacts for the Friends of the Bray, members and business partners.